



CHAPTER 6 – TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 6 PUBLIC AND AGENCY COORDINATION	6-1
6.1 INTRODUCTION	6-1
6.2 NOTICE OF INTENT	6-1
6.3 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES	6-1
6.3.1 Mailing List.....	6-1
6.3.2 Public Meetings.....	6-2
6.3.3 Community Advisory Committee	6-6
6.3.4 Community Briefings.....	6-7
6.3.5 Elected and Appointed Official Briefings.....	6-8
6.3.6 Newsletters	6-9
6.3.7 Project Website	6-10
6.3.8 Social Media.....	6-11
6.3.9 Special Outreach	6-12
6.4 AGENCY INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES	6-13
6.4.1 Agencies Roles and Responsibilities	6-13
6.4.2 Agency Scoping Meetings	6-15
6.4.3 Peer Technical Review Committee	6-15
6.4.4 Native American Consultation	6-16
6.4.5 Scoping Concurrence.....	6-16

CHAPTER 6 – LIST OF TABLES

Table 6-1: List of Agencies	6-14
Table 6-2: List of Decline Letters Received from Agencies	6-15

CHAPTER 6 – LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 6-1: Spatial distribution of the US 281 Mailing List and Meeting Attendees/Comments Received.....	6-2
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Chapter 6

Public and Agency Coordination

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The US 281 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process is being conducted with an extensive public and agency involvement program. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), and the Alamo Regional Mobility Authority (Alamo RMA) are providing numerous opportunities for stakeholders and the general public to be engaged and involved in each step of the US 281 EIS process. The intent is to solicit and consider information, ideas, and opinions in the proposed project decision making process. This is being accomplished by providing the public with opportunities for participation, contribution and education within the EIS process.

Comments and input received as part of this outreach are helping to shape the alternatives and impact analysis used in the US 281 Draft EIS.

6.2 NOTICE OF INTENT

A Notice of Intent (NOI) was published in the *Federal Register* on Wednesday, July 8, 2009 and in the *Texas Register* on Friday, July 24, 2009. The FHWA, TxDOT and the Alamo RMA issued these notices to advise the public that an EIS would be prepared for the US 281 Corridor Project on US 281 from Loop 1604 to Borgfeld Drive. Copies of the NOIs are posted on the US 281 Corridor Project website at www.411on281.com/us281eis under About » Resources & History. In August 2009, letters were sent to federal, state, regional, and local agencies and elected officials with the NOI attached to introduce the US 281 Corridor Project and solicit input on it.

6.3 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES

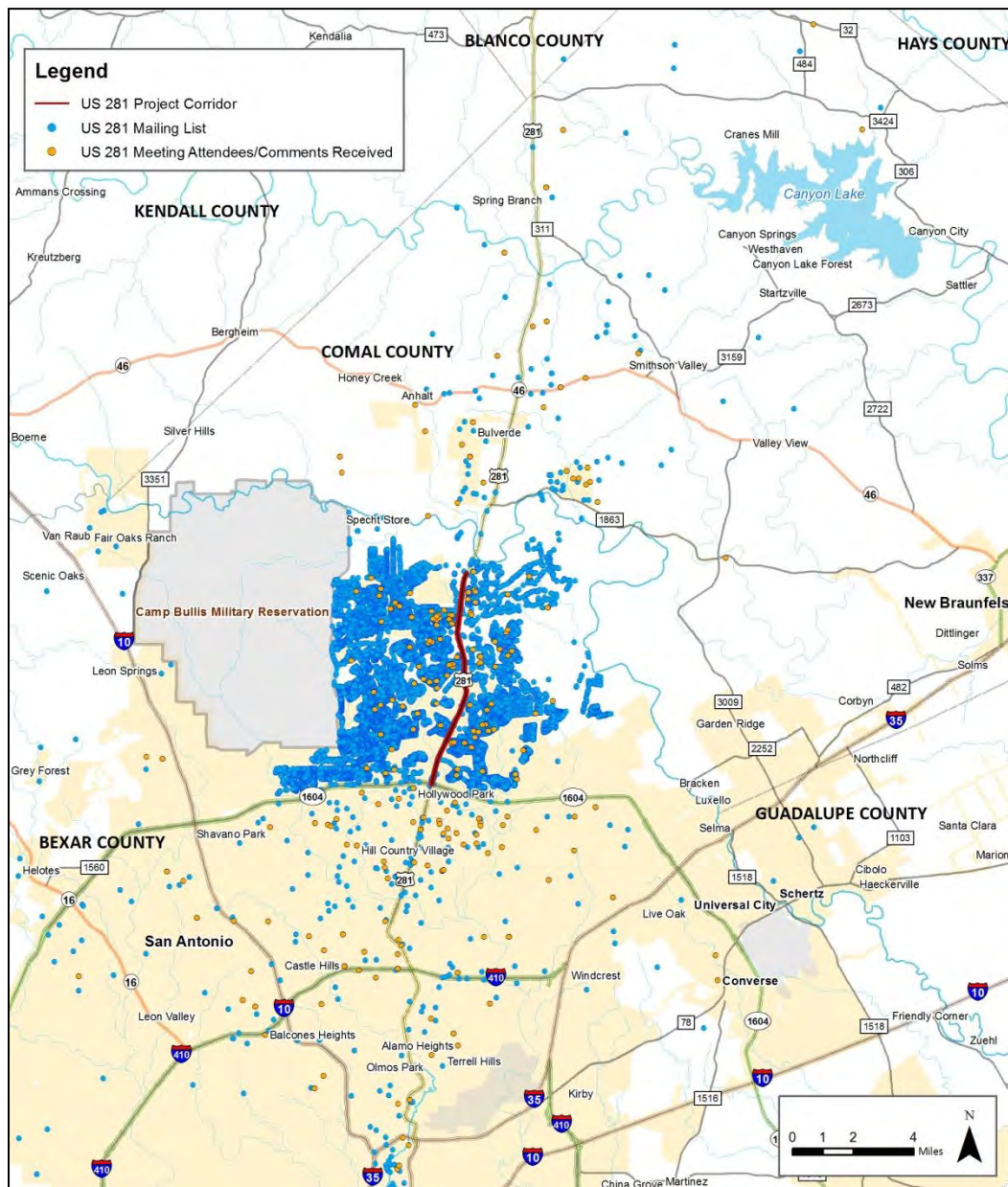
6.3.1 Mailing List

A mailing list of approximately 38,000 individuals and organizations was compiled using an existing Alamo RMA database and a purchased listing of residential and commercial addresses from 78258, 78259, 78260, and 78261. This list was continuously



updated as comments were received, as contact information was provided on sign-in sheets at public meetings, and as people entered contact information into the form on the US 281 Corridor Project website. The mailing list is being used for distribution of newsletters, dissemination of US 281 Corridor Project information, and notification of public meetings. **Figure 6-1** depicts the spatial distribution of the mailing list and the addresses of those who have attended public meetings or submitted comments.

Figure 6-1: Spatial distribution of the US 281 mailing list and meeting attendees/comments received



6.3.2 Public Meetings

During the course of the EIS process to date, three public meetings were conducted to engage the community, share information and ask the community for their comments. The meetings provided opportunities for the public to learn about and comment on the EIS as it was being developed.



The public meetings were formatted in a manner to allow for an exchange of information between the US 281 EIS Team and the community. They were interactive and invited attendees to provide feedback and input through the use of comment cards, court reporter statements, one-on-one discussions between the US 281 EIS Team and the public, as well as small group work sessions.

More information is available in the summary report for each of the meetings. Public meeting summary reports are included in **Appendix N**, and available on the US 281 Corridor Project website, www.411on281.com/us281eis/publicmeetings and are also at the following locations: Alamo RMA office, Bannwolf Library at Reagan High School, Brook Hollow Library, Frank M. Tejada Middle School and the San Antonio Central Library.

Public Scoping Meeting #1 - August 27, 2009

- The meeting was held at St. Mark the Evangelist Catholic Church Gymnasium, San Antonio, TX, approximately two miles south of the US 281 Corridor Project southern boundary.
- Meeting announcements were published in the *San Antonio Express-News*, *La Prensa* (Spanish), *San Antonio Current*, on community calendars, on the US 281 Corridor Project website and in the US 281 Corridor Project newsletter (English and Spanish). Letters were mailed to local, state, and federal elected officials. Meeting flyers were left at businesses along the US 281 project corridor.
- Approximately 135 people attended.
- The purpose of this meeting was to identify key transportation concerns and possible solutions, which could be used in the development of the need and purpose statement and determination of a preliminary range of alternatives; and to inform attendees of the EIS process.
- This meeting was conducted using an open house format from 5:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. The US 281 EIS Team and Alamo RMA representatives were available to answer questions and guide attendees through interactive exhibits.
- Attendees were encouraged to submit comments using the following methods: (1) filling out a comment card and dropping it into the comment box or posting it to a board so others could read it; (2) giving comments verbally to a court reporter; (3) submitting comments by fax, email or the US 281 Corridor Project website; and (4) mailing comments to the Alamo RMA.
- A total of 189 comments (158 written comments and 31 comments transcribed by a court reporter) were received by the September 9, 2009 deadline. Many of the comments demonstrated support for improvements along US 281 to relieve congestion as soon as possible, while also expressing concern about or opposition to financing the improvements through the use of tolls.

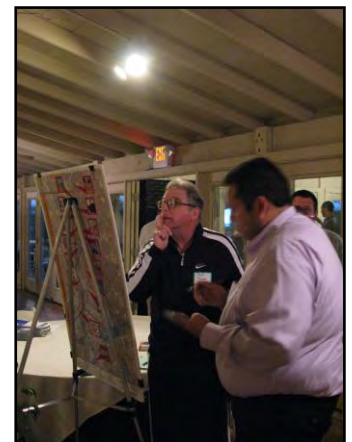
Public Scoping Meeting #2 - November 17, 2009

- The meeting was held at Spring Hill Event Center, San Antonio, TX, located within the US 281 project corridor.
- Meeting announcements were published in the *San Antonio Express-News*, *La Prensa* (Spanish), *The Glance*, *The Bulverde News*, *The North Central News*, *Welcome Home*, on community calendars, on the US 281 Corridor Project website and in the US 281 Corridor Project newsletter (English and Spanish).

Public Scoping Meeting #1



Public Scoping Meeting #2

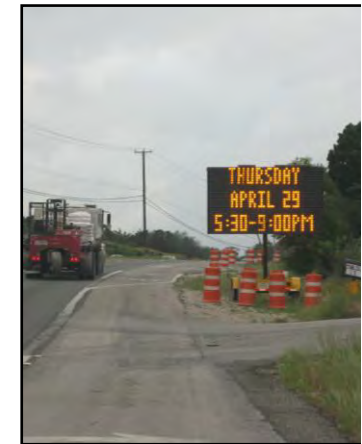




Letters were also mailed to local, state, and federal elected officials. Meeting flyers were left at businesses along the US 281 project corridor.

- Approximately 133 people attended.
- The purpose of this meeting was to gather feedback in order to refine the need and purpose statement as well as the range of alternatives; to develop a method for evaluating and screening the alternatives; and to inform attendees of the next steps in the EIS process.
- The meeting was conducted in an open house format from 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m., followed by a formal presentation from 6:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. and concluded with small group work sessions from 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. The small group exercises were developed to encourage meeting attendees to share their viewpoints with each other during a focused conversation on how the Need and Purpose for improvements on US 281 relate to the US 281 Corridor Project. The small groups were facilitated by members of the US 281 EIS Team. Throughout the meeting, the US 281 EIS Team and Alamo RMA representatives were available to answer questions and guide attendees through interactive exhibits.
- Attendees were encouraged to submit comments using the following methods: (1) filling out a comment card and dropping it into the comment box; (2) giving comments verbally to a court reporter; (3) submitting comments by fax, email or the US 281 Corridor Project website; and (4) mailing comment cards to the Alamo RMA.
- A total of 129 comments (122 written comments and 7 comments transcribed by a court reporter) were received by the November 30, 2009 deadline. Many comments demonstrated support for the conceptual alternatives, primarily the grade-separated intersections (overpasses), upgrade to an expressway and high-capacity transit. Comments ranged from opposition to tolled lanes, support for a lower cost alternative, and a desire for improvements to be built as soon as possible with or without tolls.

Dynamic Messaging Sign



Public Meeting #3 - April 29, 2010

- The meeting was held at Summit Christian Center, San Antonio, TX, located within the US 281 project corridor.
- Meeting announcements were published in the *San Antonio Express-News*, *La Prensa* (Spanish), *The San Antonio Current*, *The Bulverde News*, *The North Central News*, *The Herald Zeitung*, on community calendars, on the US 281 Corridor Project website and in the US 281 Corridor Project newsletter (English and Spanish). Letters were also mailed to local, state, and federal elected officials. Meeting flyers were left at businesses along the US 281 project corridor. In addition, banners and dynamic messaging signs were displayed throughout the US 281 project corridor.
- Approximately 224 people attended.
- The purpose of this meeting was to present the results of the alternatives evaluation and screening process and recommendations for the build alternatives to be considered in the EIS; and to inform attendees of the next steps in the EIS process.

Public Meeting #3





- The meeting was conducted in an open house format from 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m., followed by a formal presentation from 6:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. and concluded with small group work sessions from 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. The small group exercises were developed to encourage meeting attendees to share their viewpoints with each other during a focused conversation relating to each of the build alternatives (Overpass/Expansion, Expressway and Elevated Expressway). The small groups operated in a round robin fashion, so each attendee had the opportunity to participate in three separate 20-minute work sessions. The small groups were facilitated by members of the US 281 EIS Team. Throughout the meeting, the US 281 EIS Team and Alamo RMA representatives were available to answer questions and guide attendees through interactive exhibits.
- Attendees were encouraged to submit comments using the following methods: (1) filling out a comment card and dropping it into the comment box; (2) giving comments verbally to a court reporter; (3) submitting comments by fax, email or the US 281 Corridor Project website; and (4) mailing comment cards to the Alamo RMA.
- A total of 86 comments (72 written comments and 14 comments transcribed by a court reporter) were received by the May 10, 2010 deadline. Many of the comments were in support of the Overpass/Expansion and Expressway alternatives. Several comments expressed a desire to protect the Edwards Aquifer and an interest in high capacity transit. Again, comments ranged from opposition to tolled lanes, support for a lower cost alternative, and a desire for improvements to be built as soon as possible with or without tolls.

The following meetings will be held in conjunction with the Draft EIS and preparation of the Final EIS:

- **Public Hearing on the Draft EIS - Anticipated in 2013**
- **Public Meeting #4 – Preferred Alternative - Anticipated in 2013**

The public hearing and public meeting will be both informative and interactive. Open house formats will be utilized to allow attendees to preview information prior to the formal presentation and/or hearing and to create opportunities for dialogue between meeting attendees and the US 281 EIS Team.

As with the other meetings, the public will continue to be notified in advance of the hearing and meeting through newspaper advertisements, legal notices, email blasts, social media sites like Facebook and Twitter, and other media outlets. The US 281 EIS Team will also provide notices to adjacent property owners, as well as other identified, interested members of the public, through the use of the US 281 Corridor Project newsletter (electronic and hard copy via US Mail). Additional media relations will include press releases, requests for coverage, public service announcements, and media kits.

The US 281 EIS Team will continue to compile comments received at the public hearing and public meeting and ensure these comments are included in the official US 281 EIS record. Following the public hearing and public meeting, all documents, presentations, comments and responses, and other materials will be available on the 281EIS website.

Linda Ximenes leading a discussion during a Community Advisory Committee Meeting





6.3.3 Community Advisory Committee

A Community Advisory Committee (CAC) was formed that is comprised of representative groups that live or work along the US 281 project corridor as well as local governmental, quasi-governmental, and environmental organizations. This advisory group was established by the Alamo RMA to further ensure that members of the community, who may be affected by potential improvements to US 281, have ample opportunity to provide input and feedback. The committee advises the EIS team on the following aspects of the EIS process:

- Public involvement and communication activities with stakeholders and the general public related to the development of the EIS
- Development of the Need and Purpose to improve the US 281 project corridor
- Identification of the range of alternatives for the US 281 project corridor
- Identification and refinement of the Preferred Alternative
- Consideration of potential social, economic and environmental impacts and mitigation measures

The following CAC meetings were held:

- **August 20, 2009** – The purpose of this meeting was to introduce the CAC, discuss the role and responsibility of its members, and preview presentation materials and the format for Public Scoping Meeting #1. The information focused on the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the EIS process and timeline, the need and purpose statement, and the preliminary range of alternatives.
- **November 4, 2009** – The purpose of this meeting was to preview presentation materials and the format for Public Scoping Meeting #2. The information focused on the need and purpose statement, suggested US 281 Corridor Project objectives that refined the US 281 Corridor Project purpose, the range of alternatives and a method for evaluating and screening the alternatives. Following the preview of the presentation, the members participated in the small group exercise planned for Public Scoping Meeting #2.
- **April 7, 2010** – The purpose of this meeting was to preview presentation materials and format for Public Meeting #3. The information focused on the results for the alternatives evaluation and screening process and the recommended build alternatives to be analyzed in more detail in the EIS. Following the preview of the presentation, the members participated in the small group exercise planned for the public meeting.
- **October 6, 2010** – The meeting focused on the context sensitive solutions for US 281, a summary of information gathered during interviews with individual CAC members and design refinements resulting from the analysis of access solutions, storm water management, and the revised mobility measures of effectiveness (MOEs). Members expressed support that additional analysis would be completed on one of the three Proposed Build Alternatives, the Overpass/Expansion Alternative, to determine whether any further design refinements would result in mobility and safety improvements while still satisfying the lower cost and smaller footprint features of this alternative.



- **February 16, 2011** – This meeting focused on how the design refinements to the Overpass/Expansion Alternative, presented in October 2010, influenced mobility and safety north of Stone Oak Parkway compared to the No-Build Alternative. This meeting detailed three access solutions considered for refinement of Overpass/Expansion Alternative including: frontage roads, the purchase of access rights, and backage roads. In addition, revised MOEs and preliminary cost estimates were presented for each of the three build alternatives. Members expressed support that additional analysis would be conducted on the Overpass/Expansion Alternative to determine whether any further refinements would result in mobility and safety improvements while still satisfying the lower cost and smaller right-of-way features of this alternative.
- **June 22, 2011** – This meeting focused on summarizing the development of the Proposed Build Alternatives since April 2010; and the results of an analysis performed based on comments on the design refinements and MOEs received at the October 2010 and February 2011 CAC meetings.
- **December 7, 2011** – The purpose of this meeting was to discuss Indirect and Cumulative Impacts (ICI) and the role they play in the environmental process for US 281. The presentation focused on the relationship between transportation and land use as the basis for understanding and predicting indirect and cumulative impacts.

More information on the CAC, including meeting agendas, presentations and summaries, is available on the US 281 Corridor Project website, www.411on281.com/us281eis under » Community Advisory Committee.

6.3.4 Community Briefings

An offer was extended to local agencies and community groups to have a representative from the Alamo RMA present information on the EIS at their organizational meetings. This offer was also extended at public meetings, CAC meetings, on the US 281 Corridor Project website, and in the US 281 Corridor Project newsletters.

Alamo RMA staff presented or handed out project information at the following meetings:

- **July 9, 2009** at Real Estate Developers / Representatives
- **July 16, 2009** at Founders Lions Club
- **September 24, 2009** at San Antonio Evening Rotary Club
- **November 8, 2009** at KENS 5- CBS San Antonio
- **November 12, 2009** at San Antonio Builders Association
- **January 10, 2010** at KENS 5- CBS San Antonio
- **January 21, 2010** at International Right of Way Association – San Antonio Chapter
- **January 26, 2010** at District 9 Neighborhood Alliance

Community Advisory Committee Meeting



Members of the 281 EIS Community Advisory Committee represents the following groups:

- Alamo Area Council of Governments
- Alamo Sierra Club
- Aquifer Guardians in Urban Areas
- BexarMet (now part of San Antonio Water System)
- Big Springs HOA
- Cavalo Creek Homeowners Association
- Cibolo Canyons Resort Community, Inc
- Comal County
- CPS Energy
- District 9 Neighborhood Alliance
- Emerald Forest HOA
- Encino Park HOA
- Encino Ranch HOA
- Fort Sam Houston/Camp Bullis
- Greater Edwards Aquifer Alliance
- Greater San Antonio Builders Association
- HEB Grocery Company
- Lookout Canyon Property Owners Association
- Mesa Vista Homeowners Association
- Methodist Stone Oak Hospital
- Mountain Lodge HOA
- North San Antonio Chamber of Commerce
- Northeast ISD
- Professional Engineers in Private Practice
- Real Estate Council of San Antonio
- San Antonio Toll Party
- San Antonio Water System
- Stone Oak Business Owners Association
- Stone Oak Property Owners Association
- Summarglen Homeowners Association
- Town of Hollywood Park
- Texans Uniting for Reform and Freedom
- Timberwood Park



- **February 1, 2010** at JW Marriott Sales Staff
- **April 20, 2010** at Alamo Kiwanis Club
- **April 27, 2010** at District 6 Neighborhood Alliance
- **April 28, 2010** at Professional Engineers in Private Practice
- **May 3, 2010** at Texas Society of Professional Engineers, San Antonio Chapter
- **May 3, 2010** at Mountain Lodge Home Owners Association
- **September 3, 2010** at San Antonio Sunrise Rotary Club
- **September 28, 2010** at Big Springs Homeowners Association
- **October 6, 2010** at Northwest Neighborhood Association
- **December 1, 2010** at Cavalo Creek Estates Home Owners Association
- **January 19, 2011** at The Risk Management Association – San Antonio Chapter
- **February 19, 2011** at San Antonio’s Movers and Shakers – Radio Show – KLUP
- **March 2, 2011** at International Facility Management Association – San Antonio Chapter
- **March 9, 2011** at Governmental Affairs Committee – San Antonio Board of Realtors
- **April 8, 2011** at Stone Oak Area Hotel Managers Group
- **April 8, 2011** at Real Estate Council Leadership Program
- **April 11, 2011** at Northside Neighborhoods for Organized Development
- **April 14, 2011** at Texans Uniting for Reform and Freedom
- **April 25, 2011** at Randolph Metrocom Rotary
- **May 11, 2011** at African American Chamber Leadership Program
- **May 12, 2011** at Air and Waste Management Association – San Antonio Chapter
- **May 24, 2011** at Dominion Rotary Club – San Antonio
- **May 26, 2011** at South Texas Institute of Transportation Engineers – San Antonio and Austin Chapters Meeting
- **June 30, 2011** at Construction Management Association
- **July 14, 2011** at Northeast Partnership
- **July 20, 2011** at TxDOT Small Business Briefing
- **August 25, 2011** at Redland Ridge Home Owners Association Meeting
- **September 15, 2011** at Institute of Electronics and Electrical Engineers – Retired Group – San Antonio Chapter
- **September 28, 2011** at Wildhorse Homeowners Association
- **September 29, 2011** at CCIM – San Antonio Chapter
- **October 27, 2011** at Stone Oak Business Owners Association
- **November 15, 2011** at Townhall Meeting – Texas Public Radio
- **January 18, 2012** at Alamo Ranch Home Owners Association

6.3.5 Elected and Appointed Official Briefings

Alamo RMA staff gave US 281 Corridor Project updates at various regularly held meetings of the San Antonio – Bexar County Metropolitan Planning Organization (SA-BC MPO) Transportation Policy Board. Alamo RMA staff also provided occasional briefings for local elected officials on the status of the US 281 Corridor Project.



6.3.6 Newsletters

The US 281 Corridor Project newsletters and electronic newsletters were developed to keep stakeholders and the public informed throughout the EIS process and serve as another method of notification for the public meetings.

Printed Newsletters

A newsletter was mailed to approximately 38,000 addresses within the US 281 project corridor prior to each public meeting. Both English and Spanish versions of the newsletter were available at all public meetings. Descriptions of each of the newsletter's content are listed below:

Newsletter #1 - August 2009 – The purpose of this newsletter was to introduce the US 281 Corridor Project; explain the public involvement and EIS process; introduce the CAC and announce the August 27, 2009 public scoping meeting.

Newsletter #2 - November 2009 – The focus on this newsletter was to present the Need and Purpose for improvements to US 281 and the preliminary range of alternatives. It also provided a summary of attendance and comments received at the August 27, 2009 public scoping meeting; an update on the CAC; and announced the November 17, 2009 public scoping meeting.

Newsletter #3 - April 2010 – The purpose of this newsletter was to provide an update on the alternatives evaluation and screening process; summarize the ongoing biological surveys; and introduce managed lanes and the Peer Technical Review Committee (PTRC). It also summarized the attendance and comments received at the November 17, 2009 public scoping meeting and announced the April 29, 2010 public meeting.

Two additional printed newsletters will be sent out prior to the Public Hearing and Public Meeting #4.

Electronic Newsletter

In addition to the printed newsletter, beginning in September 2010, a monthly electronic newsletter was developed to replace the US 281 blog (see Section 6.3.8) and sent to approximately 800 email addresses on the US 281 Corridor Project mailing list. The electronic newsletter was designed to keep interested members of the public informed of project development issues and events. CAC members were encouraged to forward the e-newsletter to their organizations for further dissemination.

Electronic-Newsletter #1 - September 2010 – This was the first monthly electronic newsletter. It provided an introduction to the new newsletter format; discussed context sensitive solutions for US 281; provided an update on the CAC; summarized the April 29, 2010 public meeting and the build alternatives under consideration in the EIS.

Electronic-Newsletter #2 - October 2010 – The focus on this electronic newsletter was to describe water quality and stormwater management strategies for US 281; provide an update on interviews with CAC members; and an update on the US 281 Super Street, an Alamo RMA project to provide immediate relief to congestion along the US 281 project corridor.

The 4-1-1 on 281

THE LATEST ON THE US 281 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

The US 281 EIS Team has been Crunching the Numbers...

The November 2009 public scoping meeting focused on the preliminary alternatives for transportation improvements and the results from Level 1 of the Alternatives Evaluation Process.

Below is a flowchart representing the alternatives evaluation process for transportation improvements within the US 281 corridor that the US 281 EIS Team has been working through since its last public scoping meeting in November.

Alternatives Evaluation Process

Level 1: Alternatives were evaluated for final flows, such as not being compatible with regional plans, or requiring technology to meet adverse impacts.

Level 2: Alternatives were evaluated for final flows, such as not being compatible with regional plans, or requiring technology to meet adverse impacts.

Level 3: Alternatives were evaluated for final flows, such as not being compatible with regional plans, or requiring technology to meet adverse impacts.

From November 2009, the US 281 EIS team has identified alternative solutions and evaluated them for impacts to Level 2 and Level 3 of the alternatives evaluation process.

Level 3: Individual transportation modes (such as transit) were evaluated. Here are a few examples of questions that were asked in this process:

- 1) In this option capable of meeting transit needs?
- 2) Is this option able to meet transit needs?
- 3) Does this option include transit lanes?
- 4) Is it possible and practical to build a transit system from an engineering standpoint?
- 5) Is this option able to meet transit needs with a transportation mode planned or already used by the Alamo RMA?

Level 3: The individual transportation modes were evaluated for impacts to transit needs and transit lanes. Here are a few examples of questions that were asked in this process:

- 1) If this option is able to meet transit needs, is it possible and practical to build a transit system from an engineering standpoint?
- 2) What would this option cost to build?
- 3) What are the environmental impacts?
- 4) What are the social impacts?
- 5) What are the economic impacts?

Please join us on April 29, 2010 to discuss the Level 2 and Level 3 results of the alternatives evaluation process and the recommendations for Recommended Alternatives that will be carried forward in the Draft EIS for final review.

As we move forward with the EIS process, your comments will continue to help shape the future of the US 281 corridor.

US 281 EIS Team Looks at "Managed Lane" Concept

Both toll and managed lanes for improving US 281 will be evaluated in the Draft EIS, but there is a third option: tolling. Tolling is a "managed lane" that is also being considered. While the managed lane concept includes charging a toll to single-occupant vehicles, it also seeks to encourage high-occupancy vehicles (HOV) and public transportation use. Tolling who choose to travel in the public transportation tolling lane first lane of charge. Increasing HOV and transit use in the managed lane would provide benefits to the corridor in terms of air pollution, travel time, and safety.

Managed lanes have the potential to provide a variety of benefits to both motorists and transit users. While tolling can be used to encourage transit use, managed lanes could provide an alternative to tolling.

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the US 281 EIS Joint Lead Agencies (Texas Department of Transportation and the Alamo RMA) have issued a Peer Technical Review Committee to provide expert insight and advice on key transportation issues throughout the EIS process.

The committee, which is chaired by the FHWA, is responsible for providing guidance on the tolling process. The committee will meet on May 11, 2010 to discuss the tolling process and the build alternatives under consideration in the EIS.

US 281 EIS Peer Technical Review Committee

The committee, which is chaired by the FHWA, is responsible for providing guidance on the tolling process. The committee will meet on May 11, 2010 to discuss the tolling process and the build alternatives under consideration in the EIS.

The committee will include the following members:

- Federal Highway Administration
- Alamo Regional Mobility Authority
- Texas Department of Transportation
- US Army Corps of Engineers
- US Fish and Wildlife Service
- Texas Parks and Wildlife Department
- Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
- El Paso County
- Brewer County
- San Antonio - River County Metropolitan Planning Organization
- VIA Metropolitan Transit
- San Antonio Water System
- City of San Antonio

Karst & Bird Surveys Underway

This year you may see technicians and biologists digging right under your feet. They are trying to determine the sensitivity of the karst system. In looking for endangered species, karst features are important. Karst features are underground voids or cavities that are formed by the dissolution of limestone. Karst features are often found in the US 281 corridor.

The karst survey team includes experienced technicians and biologists looking for karst features. Karst is a word used to describe a type of rock that is dissolved part of the limestone bedrock, creating pathways in the rock known as cracks, voids, and caves. Karst features can be found in the US 281 corridor.

The karst survey team is looking for karst features. Karst features are often found in the US 281 corridor.

The karst survey team is looking for karst features. Karst features are often found in the US 281 corridor.

Public Meeting #3: Alternatives Evaluation Process

Join us at the Public Meeting #3: Alternatives Evaluation Process. We will discuss the alternatives evaluation process for transportation improvements. We will also discuss the recommendations for Recommended Alternatives that will be carried forward in the Draft EIS for final review.

Thursday, April 29, 2010
5:30 PM - 9:00 PM
Open House: 5:30 PM - 7:00 PM
Registration: 7:00 PM - 7:30 PM
Event Summary: 7:30 PM - 9:00 PM

Summit Christian Center
2555 Central Expressway
San Antonio, TX 78210



Electronic-Newsletter #3 - November 2010 – The main points from this month’s edition was a summary of the CAC member interviews, a description of the role and responsibilities on the PTRC and a US 281 Super Street construction update.

Electronic-Newsletter #4 - December 2010 – This electronic newsletter provided background information on the EIS process, described the role and responsibilities of the Alamo RMA and briefly summarized the October 2010 CAC meeting.

Electronic-Newsletter #5 - February 2011 – This newsletter focused on the steps that have been completed in the EIS process, what the US 281 EIS Team is currently working on, and the next steps in the process. It also provided a brief update from the February 2011 CAC meeting.

Electronic-Newsletter #6 - March 2011 – This main article provided information on why understanding and minimizing cumulative impacts is essential to making informed decisions about land and natural resource management as well as transportation improvements.

Electronic-Newsletter #7 - April 2011 – This newsletter discussed cultural resources and how they will be considered in the EIS process; recent updates to the US 281 Corridor Project website and the next steps for the CAC.

Electronic-Newsletter #8 - June 2011 – This newsletter discussed air quality in the San Antonio area and how it will be addressed in the EIS process; welcomed the Town of Hollywood Park to the CAC and encouraged readers check out the public comments being posted on Facebook and Twitter.

Electronic-Newsletter #9 - August 2011 – This newsletter highlighted a few additions to the US 281 Corridor Project website and a brief summary of the CAC meeting held on June 22, 2011.

Electronic Newsletter #10 - October 2011 – This newsletter discussed the August 2011 submittal of the Draft EIS to TxDOT for review and the elimination of the Overpass/Expansion Alternative from further consideration.

Electronic Newsletter #11 – December 2011 – This newsletter described how the US 281 Super Street was functioning after construction was completed.

Electronic Newsletter #12 – January 2012 – This newsletter highlighted a presentation given by the US 281 EIS Team to the SA-BC MPO. It also provided information on what has been accomplished so far on the US 281 EIS and what’s for the EIS.

All newsletters are available on the US 281 Corridor Project website, www.411on281.com/us281eis under » Newsletters.

6.3.7 Project Website

The “Get the 411 On 281 EIS” website was developed in July 2009 to provide information in one easily accessible location throughout the EIS process. The following information is available on the US 281 Corridor Project website:

- US 281 Corridor Project overview and maps of the US 281 project corridor
- Resources related to the EIS process, schedule and history of environmental documentation in the US 281 corridor
- Federal, state and local agency involvement
- Newsletters and blogs



- An event calendar that displays all upcoming and past public involvement activities
- All materials presented at the public scoping meetings and the public meeting (exhibits, presentations and meeting summaries)
- Information relating to the CAC (membership roster, meeting dates, presentation materials and meeting summaries)
- Peer Technical Review Committee membership roster and meeting summaries
- A mailing list sign-up and a method to submit comments
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Contact information for the Alamo RMA

Between August 2010 and May 2012, the average number of monthly visits to the website was 260. The average monthly number of page visits by new visitors was 185.

More information is available on www.411on281.com/us281eis.

6.3.8 Social Media

Social media is an important component of how people discover, read, and share news and information. The EIS used social media including Twitter (<http://twitter.com/411on281>), Facebook (<http://www.facebook.com/411on281>), Socializer and website blogs.

The number of “likes” on the Facebook page has increased by 12 percent since August 2010 (currently at 478). The number of Twitter followers has increased by 31 percent since August 2010 (currently at 156).

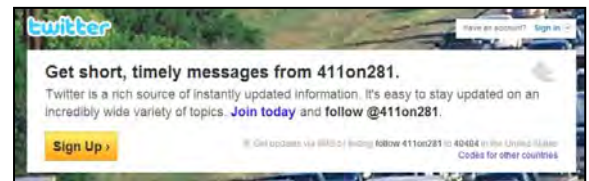
Beginning in May 2011, public comments have been posted on Facebook and Twitter to encourage discussion on the US 281 Corridor project.

The blogs were brief articles that shared factual EIS information, advertised public meetings and provided other project updates periodically. These blogs are available on the US 281 Corridor Project website:

<http://www.411on281.com/us281eis/index.cfm/blog/>

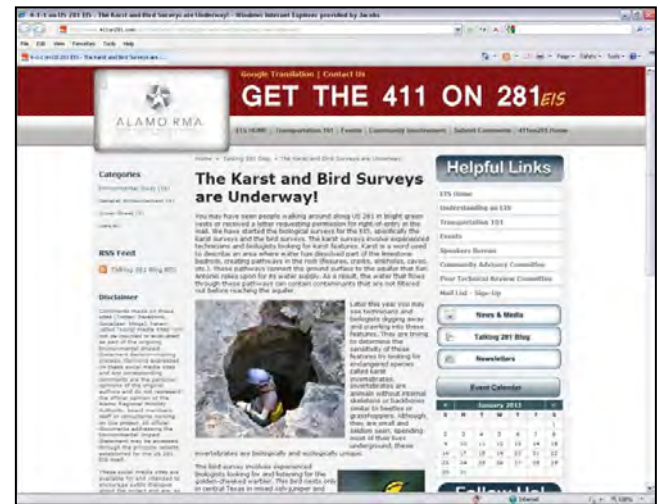
The following blogs were developed for the EIS:

- March 12, 2009 – What is the “4-1-1”?
- March 17, 2009 – Is there environmental clearance on US 281 that we aren’t using?
- March 23, 2009 – The Super Street is coming!
- April 6, 2009 – How can we reach out and become involved with our community?
- April 10, 2009 – Are toll roads the only solution the Alamo RMA can provide for traffic congestion?
- April 29, 2009 – Spring is in the air – have you seen me flying?
- June 5, 2009 – The Super Street is (still) coming!
- June 16, 2009 – On 281...it’s a car, it’s a truck...no wait, it’s Super Street!
- October 9, 2009 – What’s been going on with the US 281 EIS?
- November 2, 2009 – Why does the EIS process have to take so long?





- November 9, 2009 – Your input has helped shape the US 281 EIS! But we still need your help...
- November 12, 2009 – Join the conversation about the US 281 EIS process and preliminary alternatives being considered
- December 2, 2009 – Thank you for your participation in the US 281 EIS process!
- January 20, 2010 – New 411on281 Web Site in the Works
- February 8, 2010 – Peer Technical Review Committee Formed for US 281 EIS
- February 24, 2010 – US 281 EIS CAC
- April 7, 2010 – The Karst and Bird Surveys are Underway!
- April 12, 2010 – US 281 EIS Team Looks at “Managed Lane” Concept for US 281
- April 27, 2010 – US 281 EIS team has been crunching the numbers
- April 28, 2010 – US 281 EIS Public Meeting #3 is this Thursday, April 29th!
- April 28, 2010 – New 411on281/EIS Web Site is Live!
- May 10, 2010 – Today is the Last Day to Submit Your US 281 EIS Public Meeting #3 Comments!
- September 1, 2010 – US 281 EIS E-newsletter...Coming to Your Email Inbox!



In September 2010, the US 281 EIS blog was replaced with a monthly electronic newsletter (see **Section 6.3.6**).

The following disclaimer is located on the US 281 Corridor Project website regarding the use of social media:

Comments made on these sites (Twitter, Facebook, Socializer, blogs), herein called "social media sites" will not be included or evaluated as part of the ongoing Environmental Impact Statement decision-making process. Opinions expressed on these social media sites and any corresponding comments are the personal opinions of the original authors and do not represent the official opinion of the Alamo Regional Mobility Authority, board members, staff or consultants working on this project. All official documents addressing the Environmental Impact Statement may be accessed through the principal website established for the US 281 EIS itself. These social media sites are available for and intended to encourage public dialogue about the project and are, as such, provided for outreach and informational purposes only.

6.3.9 Special Outreach

The facilities used for all meetings were fully accessible to persons with disabilities in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. All meeting announcements provided contact information for individuals with special language or physical disabilities so that reasonable accommodations could be arranged. Spanish language translation and interpretation was made available upon request for all US 281 Corridor Project mailings and meetings.



6.4 AGENCY INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES

6.4.1 Agencies Roles and Responsibilities

Section 6002 of Public Law 109-59, “Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users,” (SAFETEA-LU) requires the identification of lead, cooperating, and participating agencies in the development of the EIS.

FHWA is a mode within the U.S. Department of Transportation and lead Federal agency responsible for NEPA analysis, management of the SAFETEA-LU Section 6002 process, and independent review of the EIS. FHWA will ensure that the US 281 Corridor Project sponsors (TxDOT and the Alamo RMA) comply with all design and mitigation commitments in the Record of Decision (ROD), if a build alternative is selected and that the EIS is appropriately supplemented if changes in the US 281 Corridor Project become necessary.

TxDOT, as US 281 Corridor Project sponsor and direct recipient of Federal-aid highway funds, is a joint lead agency. The “project sponsor” is defined as the agency or other entity, including any private or public-private entity, which seeks approval of the U.S. Department of Transportation for a highway project. TxDOT’s responsibilities mirror those of the federal lead agency.

The Alamo RMA is the US 281 Corridor Project co-sponsor, joint lead and implementation agency, primarily responsible for preparing the environmental studies and the EIS document, and conducting required public involvement activities.

The joint lead agencies (TxDOT and Alamo RMA) share in the responsibility to manage the SAFETEA-LU Section 6002 process, prepare the EIS, and provide opportunities for public and participating/cooperating agency involvement.

All federal, state, tribal, regional or local governmental agencies that may have an interest in the US 281 Corridor Project were invited to serve as participating agencies. A cooperating agency, on the other hand, is a federal, state, tribal, and local agency that has jurisdiction by law or special expertise with respect to an environmental impact involved in the US 281 Corridor Project. Cooperating agencies are also “participating agencies” (agencies with an interest in the US 281 Corridor Project), but have a higher degree of authority, responsibility, and involvement in the environmental review process than participating agencies. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, for example, is specifically responsible for the issuance of permits under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act.

In an effort to provide for more efficient environmental reviews for project decision making, SAFETEA-LU implemented the development of a coordination plan for all projects for which an EIS is prepared under the NEPA. The plan’s purpose is to coordinate public and agency participation in and comment on the environmental review process for a project or category of projects. The FHWA, as lead Federal agency, and TxDOT and Alamo RMA, as joint lead agencies, prepared a Coordination Plan to accompany the EIS. FHWA, TxDOT and the Alamo RMA solicited comments from the public and from participating and cooperating agencies regarding the Need and Purpose for the proposed project, project alternatives, methods to be used in evaluating the project alternatives, and the level of detail required in the analysis of each project alternative. The Coordination Plan describes the roles of the lead agency,

<p style="text-align: center;">SAFETEA-LU 6002 Coordination Plan – US 281 EIS</p> <p style="text-align: center;">COORDINATION PLAN</p> <p style="text-align: center;">In Accordance with Public Law 109-59, SAFETEA-LU, Section 6002</p> <p style="text-align: center;">United States Highway (US) 281 From Loop 1604 to Borgfeld Road Bexar County, Texas Control Section Job Number: 0253-04-138</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Lead Agencies: Federal Highway Administration Texas Department of Transportation Alamo Regional Mobility Authority</p> <p style="text-align: center;">October 2010</p>



- 1 joint lead agencies, and the cooperating and participating agencies.
- 2 The list of lead, joint-lead, cooperating and participating agencies is provided in the
- 3 table below. Federal agencies and tribal agencies were identified and contacted by
- 4 FHWA; TxDOT identified and contacted the state agencies, and the Alamo RMA
- 5 identified and contacted the local agencies.

6 **Table 6-1: List of Agencies**

Agency Name	Role
Federal Highway Administration	Lead Agency
Texas Department of Transportation	Joint Lead Agency
Alamo Regional Mobility Authority	Joint Lead Agency
Federal Transit Administration	Cooperating Agency
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	Cooperating Agency
U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service	Cooperating Agency
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	Cooperating Agency
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	Cooperating Agency
U.S. Department of the Interior	Participating Agency
BIA-Anadarko	Participating Agency
Apache Tribe of Oklahoma	Participating Agency
Wichita and Affiliated Tribes	Participating Agency
Alabama-Coushatta Tribe of Texas	Participating Agency
Alabama-Quassarte Tribal Town	Participating Agency
Caddo Nation of Oklahoma	Participating Agency
Comanche Nation of Oklahoma	Participating Agency
Kiowa Indian Tribe of Oklahoma	Participating Agency
Mescalero Apache Tribe	Participating Agency
Seminole Nation of Oklahoma	Participating Agency
The Delaware Nation	Participating Agency
Tonkawa Tribe of Indians of Oklahoma	Participating Agency
Camp Bullis	Participating Agency
Texas Historical Commission	Cooperating Agency
Texas Parks and Wildlife Department	Participating Agency
Texas Commission on Environmental Quality	Participating Agency
Town of Hollywood Park	Participating Agency
Bexar County	Participating Agency
City of San Antonio	Participating Agency
Comal County	Participating Agency
City of Bulverde	Participating Agency
Edwards Aquifer Authority	Participating Agency
San Antonio Water System	Participating Agency
San Antonio River Authority	Participating Agency
San Antonio – Bexar County Metropolitan Planning Organization	Participating Agency
VIA Metropolitan Transit	Participating Agency
Alamo Area Council of Governments	Participating Agency
Alamo Area Rural Planning Organization	Participating Agency
BexarMet (now part of San Antonio Water System)	Participating Agency

7 Source: US 281 EIS Team, 2013



Letters of invitation, along with a copy of the Coordination Plan, were mailed to all Lead, Cooperating, and Participating Agencies as listed in the table above. As of October 2010, the following agencies have returned a letter declining participation with the EIS.

Table 6-2: List of Decline Letters Received from Agencies

Agency Name	Date Decline Letter Received
U.S. Department of the Interior – U.S. Geological Survey	September 18, 2009
Alabama-Coushatta Tribe of Texas	September 16, 2009
Federal Transit Administration	April 30, 2010

Source: US 281 EIS Team, 2010

More information on agency roles and responsibilities is included in the Coordination Plan for the EIS. The document is available on www.411on281.com/us281eis under About »Resources & History.

6.4.2 Agency Scoping Meetings

Agency scoping meetings were held on the same days as Public Scoping Meeting #1 and Public Scoping Meeting #2. All cooperating and participating agencies were invited to attend.

August 27, 2009, prior to Public Scoping Meeting #1

- St. Mark the Evangelist Catholic Church Gymnasium
- The purpose of this meeting was to identify key US 281 Corridor Project concerns and possible solutions, which could be used in the development of the need and purpose statement and determination of a preliminary range of alternatives; and to inform attendees of the next steps in the EIS process. A copy of the Draft Coordination Plan and a walk-through of the open house exhibits was also provided.

November 17, 2009, prior to Public Scoping Meeting #2

- Spring Hill Event Center
- The purpose of this meeting was to refine the need and purpose statement and range of alternatives; to develop a method for evaluating and screening the alternatives; and to inform attendees of the next steps in the EIS process. A copy of the revised Draft Coordination Plan and a walk-through of the open house exhibits, presentation and small group exercise were also provided.

6.4.3 Peer Technical Review Committee

A Peer Technical Review Committee (PTRC) was created in an effort to continue a partnership with participating and cooperating agencies for the EIS. The FHWA, TxDOT and the Alamo RMA formed this committee to foster expert oversight and gather input from participating and cooperating agencies at key coordination points throughout the EIS process including:

- Development of the need and purpose to improve the US 281 corridor
- Identification of the range of alternatives for the US 281 corridor
- Collaboration on methodologies to be used



- 1 • Completion of the Draft EIS
- 2 • Identification and refinement of the Preferred Alternative
- 3 • Completion of the Final EIS

4 The PTRC, which is chaired by the FHWA, had its first meeting in November 2009 and
 5 will continue to work cooperatively throughout the US 281 EIS process.

6 **The following PTRC meetings were held:**

7 **November 10, 2009** – The purpose of this meeting was to introduce the
 8 committee and discuss the role and responsibility of its members. The
 9 following information was presented and discussed at this meeting: an
 10 overview of the EIS process and timeframe; the Need and Purpose for
 11 improvements to US 281; the preliminary range of alternatives; and a
 12 recommended method for evaluating and screening the alternatives.

13 **March 25, 2010** – This meeting focused on a review and discussion of the
 14 preliminary results of the alternatives development and evaluation process
 15 and recommendations for the build alternatives to be considered in the EIS.
 16 In addition, the agenda and meeting format planned for the April 29, 2010
 17 public meeting was shared with the committee.

18 **October 28, 2010** – The purpose of this meeting was to review and discuss:
 19 design refinements to the three build alternatives being considered in the EIS;
 20 revised MOEs including level of service, speed and average daily traffic data;
 21 preliminary cost estimates; the Draft Coordination Plan (October Update); the
 22 conclusion to the scoping process relating to development of the Need and
 23 Purpose statement and range of alternatives; and the methodologies and level
 24 of detail proposed to evaluate the alternatives in the Draft EIS and Final EIS.

25 **June 22, 2011** – This meeting focused on the development of all Proposed
 26 Build Alternatives and revised MOEs since April 2010 and the results of
 27 additional analysis completed based on comments received in October 2010.
 28 This meeting also included a discussion of the inclusion of a multi-use path in
 29 all build alternatives and an update on the scoping process.

30 More information on the PTRC is available on the US 281 Corridor Project
 31 website, www.411on281.com/us281eis under Peer Technical Review
 32 Committee.

Peer Technical Review Committee Meeting



Members of the US 281 EIS Peer Technical Review Committee include:

- Federal Highway Administration (Committee Chair)
- Alamo Regional Mobility Authority
- Texas Department of Transportation
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Texas Parks and Wildlife Department
- Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
- Edwards Aquifer Authority
- Bexar County
- San Antonio – Bexar County Metropolitan Planning Organization
- VIA Metropolitan Transit
- San Antonio Water System
- City of San Antonio
- Texas Historical Commission

33 **6.4.4 Native American Consultation**

34 Native American consultation with federally recognized tribes was initiated by FHWA
 35 by letter on August 14, 2009. Three responses have been received from the Wichita
 36 Department of Environmental Programs, Tonkawa Tribe of Oklahoma and the
 37 Alabama-Coushatta Tribe of Texas. No objections to the US 281 Corridor Project were
 38 expressed. All correspondence is included in **Appendix L1**.

39 **6.4.5 Scoping Concurrence**

40 Under SAFETEA-LU the FHWA and its partnering lead agencies, TxDOT and the
 41 Alamo RMA are required to provide an opportunity for involvement by cooperating
 42 and participating agencies and the public in defining the Need and Purpose, the range
 43 of alternatives, and methodologies to be used and level of detail required for the



analysis. Opportunities for involvement by agencies and the public have primarily been in the form of reviews of the Section 6002 Coordination Plan, participation in meetings, or review of project related materials online at www.411on281.com/us281eis.

Following the three public meetings held during 2009 and 2010, FHWA and the joint lead agencies developed Scoping Concurrence memoranda to concur on the following:

- As early as practicable during the US 281 environmental review process, cooperating and participating agencies and the public were provided with opportunities for involvement in defining the US 281 Need and Purpose;
- Following the opportunities for cooperating and participating agencies and public involvement, Alamo RMA, TxDOT and FHWA agreed on the US 281 Need and Purpose statement;
- The US 281 Need and Purpose statement includes a clear statement of the objectives that the proposed improvements are intended to achieve;
- As early as practicable during the US 281 environmental review process, cooperating and participating agencies were provided with opportunities for involvement in defining the methodologies to be used and the level of detail required in the evaluation of alternatives in the US 281 EIS;
- Following the opportunities for cooperating and participating agencies involvement, Alamo RMA, TxDOT and FHWA agreed on the methodologies to be used and the level of detail required in the evaluation of alternatives in the US 281 EIS;
- As early as practicable during the US 281 environmental review process, cooperating and participating agencies and the public were provided with opportunities for involvement in defining the range of alternatives to be considered in the US 281 EIS;
- Following the opportunities for cooperating and participating agencies and public involvement, Alamo RMA, TxDOT and FHWA agreed on the reasonable Proposed Build Alternatives to be evaluated in detail in the US 281 Draft EIS;
- Following the opportunities for cooperating and participating agencies and public involvement, Alamo RMA, TxDOT and FHWA agreed that the reasonable Proposed Build Alternatives meet the Need and Purpose of the project.

All scoping concurrence memorandums are included in **Appendix L2** and on www.411on281.com/us281eis under About » Resources & History.



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